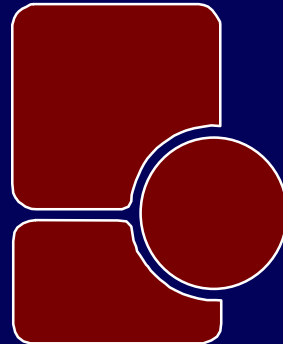


**Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission  
of the Virginia General Assembly**



**Special Report:  
Review of OASIS in the  
Department of Social Services**

**House Appropriations Committee  
Health and Human Resources Subcommittee  
February 3, 2000**

# Presentation Outline

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- **Background**
- **Funding and Expenditures**
- **Functionality and Usability**
- **Development and Implementation**
- **DSS Response to Recent Problems**
- **Conclusions and Recommendations**

# Background

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- **On-line Automated Services Information System (OASIS) is used by the Department of Social Services to automate processes and information for child welfare programs and other social services**
- **In recent months, local social services agencies have raised concerns about the system**
- **Co-Chairmen of Appropriations Committee requested that JLARC complete a review of OASIS**

# History of Implementation

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- 1994: DSS decides to pursue enhanced federal funding for child welfare systems development
- 1996: DSS issues RFP for development of system
- 1997: (June) DSS cancels RFP, begins process to transfer system from Oklahoma
- 1997: (October) Oklahoma system implemented in Virginia with modifications (adoption and foster care)
- 1999: Child protective services added to system

# Prior JLARC Review of OASIS

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- **Review of OASIS by JLARC in January 1998 found:**
  - **DSS did not adequately test OASIS prior to deployment**
  - **DSS staffing for development and testing was inadequate**
  - **Communication between DSS and local agencies was weak**
  - **DSS failed to obtain federal approval for transfer of the Oklahoma system, resulting in the loss of \$6.75 million in federal funds**

# Funding and Expenditures

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<u>System Component</u>	<u>Expenditures To-Date</u>	<u>Remaining Costs</u>
Adoption, Foster Care, and CPS	\$12,504,004	\$2,420,651
Child Day Care	770,956	1,929,044
Adult and Generic	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	\$13,274,960	\$4,349,695

- DSS reports that no additional general fund appropriations are needed for completion of OASIS

# Functionality and Usability

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- OASIS provides basic functionality to comply with federal adoption and foster care reporting requirements, but does not provide reports for local agencies to monitor their own compliance
- All four adoption and foster care reports submitted were found in substantial compliance by the federal agencies, but some data elements had errors, resulting in penalties of \$660,763

# Functionality and Usability (continued)

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- System security has been a problem, with workers able to approve own cases, and supervisors able to modify security for workers in other localities
- OASIS does not purge child protective services cases as required by law and policy
- Some reports are available from OASIS, but many management and supervisory reports unavailable
- OASIS prints blank fields in reports, making reports unusable for some purposes, such as court documentation



# Functionality and Usability (continued)

9

- Some data fields do not provide adequate choices for case documentation, and some text fields are too short for case narrative; results in inaccurate case records
- Data entry difficult because of too many screens, too many optional data fields, and screens that do not match business process in local agencies
- System difficult to navigate due to multiple layers of menu bars

# Development and Implementation

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- Local agencies have not been adequately consulted in process to modify the Oklahoma system for use in Virginia
- DSS does not complete adequate testing of new releases prior to deployment statewide; fixes for one problem result in other problems not found until deployment
- DSS does not pilot new releases in the local agencies prior to deployment statewide

# Development and Implementation (continued)

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11

- Local agencies had mixed opinions on the quality of training provided to workers
- DSS has not provided adequate training on the new releases of OASIS
- Local workers reported that user manuals are inadequate
- Local agencies reported that on-going support, such as the help desk, have not met local needs

# DSS Response to Recent Problems

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- DSS has delayed enhancements to OASIS in order to concentrate resources on fixing problems in the existing system
- DSS sent central office staff to local agencies to investigate and better define the nature of problems
- DSS has created an OASIS steering committee and four “expert panels” of local staff to help define the requirements for future system modifications
- DSS hired a consultant to create a communications plan to improve relationships with local agencies

# Conclusions and Recommendations

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- DSS should continue its development and deployment of OASIS because it provides the basic foundation for services automation
- DSS should continue development of the child day care case management and adult services components as part of OASIS
- Problems and concerns identified by local agencies appear valid and need to be addressed by DSS
- DSS needs to slow its development process to provide for proper planning, testing, and piloting of the system

# Conclusions and Recommendations

## (continued)

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- DSS should develop a more systematic process for responding to problems with OASIS, including developing a comprehensive plan for managing the redesign of the system, defining how it will manage the local committees assisting with the redesign, and developing more useful training for local workers
- DSS should implement a comprehensive testing protocol, employ automated tools for testing, and pilot new releases with selected local agencies